



CONSENT CALENDAR  
April 30, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmembers Rigel Robinson and Sophie Hahn  
Subject: Referral: Report on Public Realm Pedestrianization Opportunities

### RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the Transportation Commission to generate a report on potential public realm pedestrianization opportunities in Berkeley.

### BACKGROUND

In many ways, the City of Berkeley is at the forefront of smart, transit-oriented urban growth. Among all US cities of 100,000+ inhabitants, the US Census and American Community Surveys show that Berkeley ranks third in percentage of pedestrian commuters at 16%<sup>1</sup>, first in percentage of bicycle commuters at 10%<sup>2</sup>, and 13th in percentage of public transit ridership at 22%<sup>3</sup>. Berkeley plays a crucial role on the national stage when it comes to designing safe, inclusive, and sustainable urban environments for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and motorists.

As urban centers have shifted to design around people instead of cars, cities like Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York have looked to pedestrian plazas and shared streets like those found in Europe or Asia. These cities have found that street-to-plaza conversions promote local businesses, encourage neighborhood interaction, increase pedestrian safety, stimulate non-motorized transportation, and contribute to the vibrant identity and community of the city.<sup>4</sup> Common concerns toward street closure include the effect of closure on street network connectivity and the capacity of adjacent streets.

An ideal solution to address these concerns would not only incorporate full access to pedestrians and cyclists, but also incorporate express access for public transit and emergency medical services through the use of bollards or planters.

<sup>1</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20060312115227/http://www.bikesatwork.com/carfree/carfree-census-database.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/Where\\_We\\_Ride\\_2014\\_data\\_web.pdf#12](http://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/Where_We_Ride_2014_data_web.pdf#12)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_U.S.\\_cities\\_with\\_high\\_transit\\_ridership](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._cities_with_high_transit_ridership)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.deeproot.com/blog/blog-entries/the-rise-of-the-pedestrian-plaza-street-to-plaza-conversions-in-the-u-s>

When considering pedestrianization zones in Berkeley, the report should review prior recommendations as well as existing public realms that regularly undergo street closure. Telegraph Ave between Bancroft Way and Dwight Way has been previously recommended and regularly undergoes closure for the Telegraph Holiday Street Fair and Berkeley World Music Festival.<sup>5</sup> Center St or Allston St between Martin Luther King Jr Way and Milvia St are often closed for the Berkeley Farmers' Market on Saturdays or annually for the Bay Area Book Festival. Besides the Telegraph Ave entrance to campus, Center St between Shattuck Ave and Oxford St<sup>6</sup> as well as Euclid Ave between Hearst Ave and Ridge Rd function as other primary entrances to the campus area. Based on the City of Berkeley's Pedestrian Master Plan and Bicycle Plan, all of these destinations represent high injury corridors as well as concentrated areas of demand for pedestrians and cyclists.<sup>78</sup>

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Increasing non-motorized transportation and promoting walkable lifestyles reduces greenhouse gas emissions caused by automobile use.

### CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Rigel Robinson, (510) 981-7170  
David Lin, Intern

### Attachments:

- 1: Telegraph Avenue Public Realm Plan (<https://www.berkeleyside.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Telegraph-Public-Realm-Plan-Final-Low-Res.pdf>)
- 2: City of Berkeley Pedestrian Master Plan ([https://www.berkeleyside.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Berkeley-PMP\\_2019-02-05-Worksession-Presentation.pdf](https://www.berkeleyside.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Berkeley-PMP_2019-02-05-Worksession-Presentation.pdf))
- 3: City of Berkeley Bicycle Plan (<http://www.bikeberkeley.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017-Final.pdf>)

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.berkeleyside.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Telegraph-Public-Realm-Plan-Final-Low-Res.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://ecocitybuilders.org/eco-plaza-in-the-heart-of-the-city/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.berkeleyside.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Berkeley-PMP\\_2019-02-05-Worksession-Presentation.pdf](https://www.berkeleyside.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Berkeley-PMP_2019-02-05-Worksession-Presentation.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.bikeberkeley.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017-Final.pdf>